

ASOR Chairs Coordinating Council
Conference Call Minutes
July 20, 2020, 11:00 AM EST

Present: Teddy Burgh, Jane DeRose Evans, Helen Dixon, Steve Falconer, Sharon Herbert, Chuck Jones, Kevin McGeough, Marta Ostovich, Allison Thomason, Andy Vaughn, Eric Welch, Lynn Welton

Absent: Tiffany Earley-Spadoni

1. Approval of June Minutes: Minutes approved

2. ASOR's Name Survey and Open Letter

Survey on ASOR's Name

- The most popular name from the recent survey was SANER, though there is a problem with SANER as it is a book series acronym.
- The response “none” got the second highest number of votes. This choice included both keeping the ASOR acronym and/or keeping the ASOR name.
- SAPHME also received a lot of votes.
- It is important to note that this was a poll, not a vote, and the the decision will ultimately fall to the the Board.

Open Letter on ASOR's Name

- **Geographical Concerns**
Chuck said that one of the concerns raised in the open letter is the use of Near and Middle Eastern. Not sure what the alternative is to describe geographical region. Some of the options mentioned were MENA, Western or Southwestern Asia, or Eastern Mediterranean.
Eric noted that the Committee on ASOR's Name had avoided Near East and Middle East to start. While it is important to members to know where we work, it was not clear how best to label the regions. SW Asia? W Asia? The Committee's process has slowed down because of the feedback they received on the use of Near East and Middle East. They are meeting tomorrow.
Andy raised the issue of public perception of ASOR's name. The public is not familiar with many of the proposed geographical descriptors, even though they are accurate from a scholarly standpoint.
- **Removal of “Oriental”**
Sharon stated that while it is clear that Oriental has to go, it is unclear what the best move is. One proposed option is the American Society of Overseas Research. There was discussion here over how much ASOR can say about getting rid Oriental. Sharon reported that ASOR is working on removing Oriental from all logos and correspondence.

- **Response to the Open Letter**

There are many other DEI initiatives that the letter raises, aside from the the removal of Oriental from the name. Some committee members called for a response to the letter. The open letter has not yet been sent to the Board or officers, even though it is likely that many have seen it and are aware of it. Chuck has been in conversation with authors. It was agreed that Eric would encourage Tiffany and the other authors of the letter to submit it to Sharon and the Board.

There was further discussion of how to keep conversations on DEI moving forward and how to operationalize changes. Suggestions included looking at other learned societies and what they are doing for training, self-training and educating ourselves, taking advantage of programs offered through universities, and talking with one another about these topics.

3. Strategic Plan

Chuck invited comments and revisions from the committees. COP has already provided some feedback on rewriting sections that pertain to publications.

Jane reported that the CH committee has discussed revisions. The committee rewrote a paragraph that had been circulated.

Helen reported that the PC is busy with the virtual annual meeting, but can provide more specific feedback if need be.

Teddy said that COM is looking at outreach, the FOA budget, approaching past members, encouraging new members, aspects, and more.

Steve stated that CAP is reviewing fellowship and grant offerings, target audiences, and resources available to underrepresented groups.

Lynn reported that while H&A has less direct impact on strategic goals there has been strong feedback on DEI. The committee wants to increase diversity in nominations for awards and expand the range of nominations.

Eric said that the EC priorities can be seen in open letter. He mentioned including diversity as its own point, not just sprinkled throughout strategic plan. Other goals include academic and professional development, service (chairing sessions etc.), hiring metrics (excavation, research, grants), and securing jobs.

Kevin reported on the COP monograph issues (expansion and struggling to find consensus).

Chuck addressed the timeline for revision of Strategic Plan. The plan is to have a page for each part, which can be taken to the Executive Committee, by end of summer.

Sharon asked for one-page outlines by next meeting (August 13th). Ideally these pages will be pre-circulated.

Chuck and Marta will work on setting up a Google folder with parallel document including thoughts from the committees.